GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:371
ANSWERED ON:10.09.2007
DEGENERATION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND INTO RAVINES
Argal Shri Ashok

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the increase in erosion from various rivers, particularly from the river Chambal every year has made the agricultural land degenerate into ravines;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to check such erosion all over the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 371 DUE FOR REPLY ON 10TH SEPTEMBER, 2007.

(a) to (c): The process of soil denudation and formation is a natural process which is occurring simultaneously to maintain the equilibrium in natural eco-system. Land degradation is a dynamic natural process and can be minimized with proper management of natural resources. As per available estimates, out of the total geographical area of 328.60 million ha., about 146.82 million ha. is subjected to various kinds of land degradation in the country, which includes water erosion to the extent of 93.68 million ha. Out of total eroded soil, 61% moves from one place to another, nearly 29% is lost permanently to the sea and remaining 10% is deposited in the reservoirs. The soil erosion leads to land degradation in upper reaches of the river system, whereas when deposited at various locations of the river systems it may increase the soil fertility. With a view to minimize soil erosion, land degradation, siltation of multipurpose reservoirs and to reduce flood peaks & volume of runoff a Centrally Sponsored Programme of Soil Conservation for Enhancing the Productivity of Degraded Lands in the Catchments of River Valley Project & Flood Prone River (RVP & FPR) is being implemented. Presently, this programme is being implemented in 56 catchments of 27 States in the country.

The ravinous land is a form of highly degraded land and is usually associated with network of gullies formed generally in deep alluvium soils and entering nearby river, flowing much lower than the surrounding table lands. The ravines therefore, are extensive system of gullies developed along river courses. There are three categories of ravines, namely deep (more than 5 metres deep), medium (2.50 to 5.00 metres deep) and shallow ravines (less than 2.50 metres deep).

As per the Wastelands Atlas of India-2005, brought out by Ministry of Rural Development in collaboration with National Remote Sensing Agency, Hyderabad, the total ravines area is 19.04 lakh ha. in the country. The estimate for the ravine ingress ranges from 0.45% to 2.41% with an overall average of 0.865% per year. This implies that every year about 16,469 ha. of more land is engulfed by existing ravines. Villages situated within about 2 Kms. range of Chambal river or its tributaries are under the grip of gully erosion.

The chambal ravines are spread over in four States, namely Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat as per details given below:-

S.No	Name of the State	Area in lakh ha.
1.	Gujarat	0.39
2.	Madhya Pradesh	5.28
3.	Rajasthan	6.60
4.	Uttar Pradesh	3.25
	Total	15.52

In addition to the Soil Conservation for Enhancing the Productivity of Degraded Lands in the Catchments of River Valley Project & Flood Prone River (RVP & FPR), Government of India is implementing various Watershed Development Programmes with a view to prevent soil erosion and land degradation. These are
(i) National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPRA),

(ii) Reclamation of Alkali Soils (RAS),
(iii) Watershed Development Project for Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA)
(iv) Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP),
(v) Desert Development Programme (DDP),
(vi) Integrated Wasteland Development Project (IWDP),
(vii) Watershed Development Fund (WDF) and
(viii) Externally Aided Projects (EAPs). Under these programmes, since inception upto end of X Five Year Plan about 50.83 million ha. of degraded lands have been developed as per details annexed.

The Working Group of the Sub Committee of National Development Council (NDC) on Agriculture and related Issues on Dryland/Rainfed Farming System including Regeneration of Degraded/Wasteland, Watershed Development Programmes has recommended about 38 million ha. land for development with estimated cost of about Rs.32095.00 crore during XI Plan including development of gullied & ravinous lands.